

BEFORE THE  
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268

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POSTAL RATE COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of: )  
 )  
Birmingham Green, Alabama 35237 ) Docket No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Post Office, State, Zip Code )  
 )  
George Prince, Terry Finch, and James E. Roberts, )  
Petitioners, )  
 )  
v. )  
 )  
United States Postal Service, )  
Respondent )

**JOINT PETITION FOR REVIEW AND  
APPLICATION FOR SUSPENSION**

Now Comes the Petitioners, George Prince, Terry Finch and James E. Roberts, individually and on behalf of the patrons of the Birmingham Green Post Office located at 317 North 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Birmingham, Alabama 35237, to contest the closing or consolidation of this postal facility. In support of this Petition for Review and Application for Suspension, the Petitioner would show as follows:


1. On or about August 27, 2003, notice was given by the United States Postal Service that the Birmingham Green Station post office would be closed and retail and post office box services would be provided by the Main Post Office located at 351 24<sup>th</sup> Street North, Birmingham, AL 35203. See copy of notice attached.
2. The August 27, 2003 Notice of Final Determination stated the Birmingham Green facility would be closed by September 12, 2003, fifteen (15) days after the notice was posted. CFR § 241.3 (iii) states that "the written determination must be made available to persons served by the post office at least 60 days before the discontinuance takes effect." The United States Postal Service's Determination is clearly without observance of procedure required by law.
3. The closing or consolidation of this postal facility will have adverse effects on the community served by said post office.
  - (A) Numerous businesses, religious institutions, and federal government agencies utilize this facility on a daily basis. It would not be in the best

interest of the community to relocate such a large number of patrons to the Main Post Office.


- (B) In addition to surrounding businesses, a number of patrons are elderly and minorities who ride the bus. The contract post office proposed for the area would not maintain any post office boxes. These individuals would have to travel almost a mile round trip out of their way to the Main Post Office. Most patrons walk to and from the facility carrying at least two large cartons of mail several times a day.
  - (C) Attached are copies of petitions with 1550 signatures of Birmingham Green patrons requesting the facility remain open to serve the needs of the community.
- 4. The Postal Service failed to consider in its Proposal to Consolidate all of the disadvantages closing this facility would have on the downtown community.
  - 5. The Postal Service failed to disclose in its Proposal to Consolidate the Birmingham Green Station and Establish a Contract Postal Unit, a copy of which is attached, the profitability of said station. It indicated a total annual savings of \$245,796.00, which is the cost of operation, but provided no statement of income or revenue for the facility.
  - 6. Closing or consolidation of the Birmingham Green Station and replacing it with a Contract Postal Unit would not provide anywhere near the degree of regular and effective postal services to the Birmingham business district and minority customers. The Contract Postal Unit proposed would only provide retail services, such as purchasing stamps.
  - 7. The Postal Service did not adequately respond to the concerns raised by members of the community both in the public hearing and in the questionnaire responses.
  - 8. See Participant Statement attached.

The Petitioners are filing herewith a Participant Statement to appeal this decision to the Postal Rate Commission. Petitioners request, for the reasons indicated above, all further action on this matter be suspended pending the outcome of the appeal.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Petitioner, George Prince  
1341 16<sup>th</sup> Place S.W.

Birmingham, AL 35211

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Terry Finch", written over a horizontal line.

Petitioner, Terry Finch  
3081 Lorna Rd., Suite 111A  
Birmingham, AL 35216

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James E. Roberts", written over a horizontal line.

Petitioner, James E. Roberts  
P.O. Box 370004  
Birmingham, AL 35237

BEFORE THE  
POSTAL RATE COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268

<u>In the Matter of:</u>	)	
	)	
<u>Birmingham Green, Alabama 35237</u>	)	Docket No.: _____
Post Office, State, Zip Code	)	
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George Prince, Terry Finch, and James E. Roberts,	)	
Petitioners,	)	
	)	
v.	)	
	)	
United States Postal Service,	)	
Respondent	)	

**PARTICIPANT STATEMENT**

1. Petitioners are appealing the Postal Service's Final Determination concerning the Birmingham Green post office. The Final Determination was posted on or about August 27, 2003.
2. In accordance with applicable law, 39 U.S.C. § 404(b)(5), the Petitioners request the Postal Rate Commission to review the Postal Service's determination on the basis of the record before the Postal Service and the information submitted herein in the making of the determination.
3. Petitioners state as follows:
  - A. The Postal Service's Final Determination was Made Without Observance of Procedure Required by Law.

The August 27, 2003 Notice of Final Determination stated the Birmingham Green facility would be closed by September 12, 2003, fifteen (15) days after the notice was posted. CFR § 241.3 (iii) states that "the written determination must be made available to persons served by the post office at least 60 days before the discontinuance takes effect." The United States Postal Service's Determination is clearly without observance of procedure required by law.

Prior to the expiration 30 days from the date of the Notice of Final Determination, postal patrons were required to change their postal address to another box or street address. Further, although the boxes may not have been active, removal of boxes and using unpainted plywood to

fill in the spaces constitutes a closing of the post office prior to the attempts of interested individuals to appeal the closing.

Pursuant to the Rules of Practice and Procedure Section 3001.117 the postal service has not caused to be displayed prominently a copy of the service list and all pleadings, notices, orders, briefs, and opinions filed in such proceeding. The failure by the postal service to display prominently such documents is deemed, pursuant to the above referenced section, to suspend, the effectiveness of the postal service determination under review until final disposition of the appeal. On June 10, 2003, the Honorable Paul T. Barrett, Postmaster in the Proposal to Consolidate the Birmingham Green Station and Establish a Contract Postal Unit ("the Proposal") indicated at Section VII Notices, that support materials were available for public inspection at the Birmingham Green Station and Main Post Office during normal business hours. Up September 10, 2003 no materials upon which the Proposal was based were available for public inspection at the Birmingham Green Station. This fact alone makes your Petitioners unable to effectively counter the Proposal and is basis for the Commission to remand the matter to the Postal Service for further consideration. See affidavits of James E. Roberts, George Prince, and John Fernandes, attached.

Further, the initial public hearing on this matter was held on Thursday, April 17, 2003 at 4:00 p.m. when a majority of the postal patrons are still at work. For this reason, many customers were unable to attend the hearing to express their views to the Postal Service. The Postal Service could not sufficiently consider the effect closing or consolidating the Birmingham Green Station would have on the community if it did not hear from a majority of the community

B. The Postal Service did not consider the location of the Main Post Office which alleged to be an alternative site. The Main Post Office is four-tenths of a mile from the downtown Birmingham Green station and is immediately contiguous to the Jimmy Hale Mission. The rescue mission is a longtime facility which allows derelicts and homeless to spend the night and receive food and lodging. It is, however, a magnet for many alcoholics and drug addicts. This is not to criticize the Mission, but their rules do not allow a person intoxicated or on drugs to stay there. Therefore, particularly in winter months, the persons turned away at 5:00 p.m. for drug addiction and/or alcoholism are in the immediate vicinity of the Main Post Office. Pedestrian traffic is almost non-existent when the it gets dark around 5:00 p.m. The Post Office review did not consider the danger factor of the Main Post Office because of its proximity to the Mission. This will create a real and present danger to postal patrons. The Birmingham Green Station is serviced by the City Action Patrol (CAP) which is a private security organization funded by downtown businesses. CAP gives customers of the Birmingham Green Station added security. They patrol from 16<sup>th</sup> Street to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and do not cover the area surrounding the Main Post Office.

C. There is no guarantee a CPU (Contract Postal Unit) will be established or able to serve the needs of the downtown business community and the needs of inner-city residents and persons dependent on public transportation. A roundtrip walk for the elderly and disabled will be almost a mile.

D. A main problem not addressed in the Proposal to Consolidate the Birmingham Green Station and Establish a Contract Postal Unit was the fact that at the public hearing, customers complained about the driveway and lack of parking at the Main Post Office stating it was not adequate for its existing traffic. The response of the Postal Service was "the driveway and parking lot conditions at the Main Post Office were brought to the attention of Administrative Services at the Alabama District." Bringing an untenable situation to the attention of the Alabama District does not solve the problem. If the existing customers at the Birmingham Green station who have transportation were to drive to the Main Post Office, the entire parking lot would be completely flooded and could not serve the needs of the public. No traffic or parking study was done to support the feasibility of the Main Post Office as an alternate site. The Proposal is, therefore, ineffective as a traffic study could have been commissioned which would determine the increased load on the already over stressed parking condition at the Main Post Office.

E. Customers complained the loss of the downtown post office would have a detrimental effect on the downtown business community. The Postal Service's response was "there is no indication that the business community would be adversely affected." No studies were done or proposed that would show or justify the failure of the downtown business community to be adversely affected. In fact, shortly after the June 10, 2003 Proposal was filed, the McDonald's next door to the Birmingham Green Station closed its doors. The U.S.P.O. states the questionnaire responses indicated customers would continue to use local businesses if the post office is discontinued. No proof of such fact nor production of the responses has ever been furnished to any postal patron or to the persons appealing this adverse closing.

F. The Proposal states "it was determined there has been minimal growth in the area in recent years. However, CPU is expected to be able to handle any future growth in the community." The Proposal goes on to state "based on the information obtained in the course of this discontinuance study, the Postal Services concludes this proposal will not adversely affect the community." Once again, no one has been furnished the scope or substance of the purported information obtained.

G. The Proposal erroneously states a petition with 150 signatures was received at the April 17, 2003 hearing. In fact, the petition contained over 600 signatures and, to date, has in excess of 1500 signatures.


H. Section IV- Economic Savings of the Proposal does not show the profit margin of the facility, but simply lists the costs associated with the operation of the facility. It does not disclose the revenue side of the equation. This shows an economic savings by listing the "cost and goods sold" without balancing revenue. It is an absurd and blatant attempt to avoid a reasonable and truthful determination of whether or not any economic savings exist. Even an untrained accountant, on a profit and loss statement, would never list the cost of operation of a business without listing the revenue and income in determining profit or loss. The Proposal submitted by the Postmaster on June 10, 2003 erroneously states the Postal Service will save an estimated \$245,796.00 annually. This figure is not correct as it does not include an offset for


revenue. It is the opinion of the writer this facility may in fact be profitable when revenue is considered.

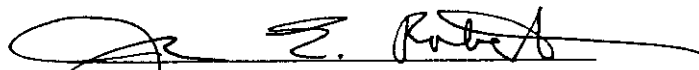
I. In Section V- Other Factors of the Proposal, the Postal Service proposes the replacement service via CPU will provide maximum degree of regular and effective postal service to the *Birmingham business district customers*. The Postal Service, however, has made no posting or provided any information of its intent or ability to start a CPU. A disclaimer is made that once this postal facility is closed, consideration may be given to closing the CPU.

The above premises considered, it is the request of the Petitioners that the Postal Rate Commission acting in its official capacity issue an Order to the Postmaster and the United States Post Office that this matter be reconsidered by the Postmaster giving all interested parties sufficient time and information to study the material which has not been supplied pursuant to the Proposal to Consolidate the Birmingham Green Station and Establish a Contract Postal Unit. Your Petitioners believe the majority of the information contained in the Proposal is solely speculation. If the Postmaster had done reasonable studies, he could not have arrived at the decision to close this facility. It is a critical and vital part of downtown Birmingham which serves the needs of the business community and the disenfranchised, predominately minorities, who use city transportation to conduct necessary business in the downtown area. It is Petitioners' position that no consideration was given the existence of the Jimmy Hale Mission being contiguous to the Main Post Office. This fact, having been overlooked in statements that the Main Post Office will serve the needs of the 1550 persons who signed the petition, should cause the Postal Service to at least commission studies to have an actual basis for its unsubstantiated, undocumented conclusions contained in the June 10, 2003 Proposal to Consolidate Birmingham Green Station and Establish a Contract Postal Unit.

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Petitioner, George Prince  
1341 16<sup>th</sup> Place S.W.  
Birmingham, AL 35211

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Petitioner, Terry Finch  
3081 Lorna Rd., Suite 111A  
Birmingham, AL 35216



Petitioner, James E. Roberts  
P.O. Box 370004  
Birmingham, AL 35237



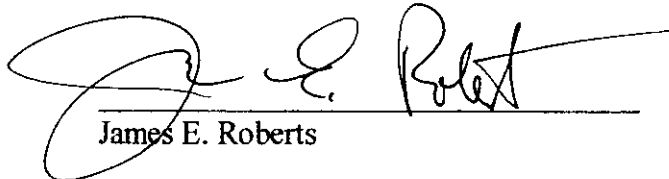
STATE OF ALABAMA     )  
JEFFERSON COUNTY    )

**AFFIDAVIT**

The undersigned, James E. Roberts, gives this affidavit in connection with the closing of the Birmingham Green Postal Station. I visited the Birmingham Green Station on the morning of September 10, 2003 at approximately 9:20. I requested detailed information regarding the basis for the recommendation to close the Birmingham Green station of the lone postal clerk, Ms. Debbie Taylor. Ms. Taylor indicated no such information was available, but there had been a posting of the notice to close which was no longer there. Ms. Taylor pointed to a bulletin board which had numerous other irrelevant documents and indicated that was where the notice has been posted. I knew other important notices were posted on bulletin boards or on the door leading into and out of the post office. Ms. Taylor indicated she had no knowledge of the material referenced in Postmaster, Paul T. Barrett's Proposal to Consolidate the Birmingham Green Station and Establish a Contract Postal Unit.

Pursuant to the Rules of Practice and Procedure Section 3001.117 the postal service has not caused to be displayed prominently a copy of the service list and all pleadings, notices, orders, briefs, and opinions filed in such proceeding. The failure by the postal service to display prominently such documents is deemed, pursuant to the above referenced section, grounds to suspend the effectiveness of the postal service determination under review until final disposition of the appeal. I, therefore, by virtue of this affidavit request that since the posting of documents as required by section 3001.117 of the Rules of Practice and Procedure as promulgated by the Postal Rate Commission were not followed, the determination to consolidate be suspended until such time as the United States Post Office follows its own rules and regulations.

As further grounds, the Notice of Final Determination dated August 27, 2003 stated the Birmingham Green Station would be closed by September 12, 2003, 15 days from the date of the Notice. This did not allow for the statutory period of 60 days from the date of the Final Determination to close the facility. In addition, a whole bank of post offices boxes were removed and replaced with unpainted plywood. Customers, including myself, were told, with less than 30 days notice, that if they failed to change their addresses their mail would be deemed undeliverable.

  
James E. Roberts

STATE OF ALABAMA     )  
JEFFERSON COUNTY    )

I, Mary Christina Evans, a Notary Public in and for said county, in said state, hereby certify that James E Roberts, whose name is signed to the foregoing affidavit and who is known by me, acknowledged before me on this day, that being informed of the contents of said affidavit, executed

same voluntarily on the day the same bears date.

Given under my hand and official seal this the 11<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2003.

My commission expires:

Mary Christina Gans  
Notary Public [SEAL]

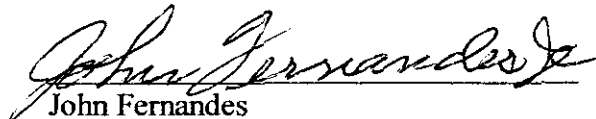
NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF ALABAMA AT LARGE  
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: July 28, 2007  
BONDED THRU NOTARY PUBLIC UNDERWRITERS

STATE OF ALABAMA     )  
JEFFERSON COUNTY    )

**AFFIDAVIT**

Now Comes the undersigned, John Fernandes, and gives this affidavit in connection with the procedures followed by the United States Postal Service in closing the Birmingham Green Station located at 317 North 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Birmingham, Alabama 35237.

I have visited the Birmingham Green postal station on almost a daily basis since June 10, 2003. No materials or documents supporting the closing of this facility have been available for public inspection at the Birmingham Green Station from June 10, 2003 to the present.

  
John Fernandes

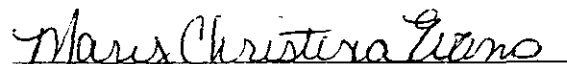
STATE OF ALABAMA     )  
JEFFERSON COUNTY    )

I, Mary Christina Evans, a Notary Public in and for said county, in said state, hereby certify that John Fernandes, whose name is signed to the foregoing affidavit and who is known by me, acknowledged before me on this day, that being informed of the contents of said affidavit, executed same voluntarily on the day the same bears date.

Given under my hand and official seal this the 11<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2003.

My commission expires:

NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF ALABAMA AT LARGE  
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: July 22, 2007  
BONDED THRU NOTARY PUBLIC UNDERWRITERS

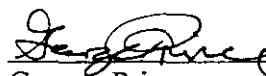
  
Notary Public                      [SEAL]

STATE OF ALABAMA     )  
JEFFERSON COUNTY    )

**AFFIDAVIT**

Now Comes the undersigned, George Prince, and gives this affidavit in connection with the procedures followed by the United States Postal Service in closing the Birmingham Green Station located at 317 North 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Birmingham, Alabama 35237.

I have visited the Birmingham Green postal station several times since June 10, 2003. No materials or documents supporting the closing of this facility have been available for public inspection at the Birmingham Green Station from June 10, 2003 to the present.

  
George Prince

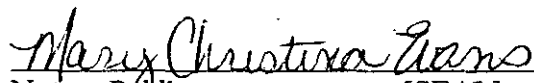
STATE OF ALABAMA     )  
JEFFERSON COUNTY    )

I, Mary Christina Evans, a Notary Public in and for said county, in said state, hereby certify that George Prince, whose name is signed to the foregoing affidavit and who is known by me, acknowledged before me on this day, that being informed of the contents of said affidavit, executed same voluntarily on the day the same bears date.

Given under my hand and official seal this the 11<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2003.

My commission expires:

NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF ALABAMA AT LAFAYETTE  
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: July 13, 2007  
BONDED THRU NOTARY PUBLIC UNDERWRITERS

  
Notary Public     [SEAL]



August 27, 2003

Dear Postal Customer:

This is to advise you that the Birmingham Green Post Office will be officially closed September 12, 2003. Retail and P. O. Box services will be provided by the Main Post Office located at 351 24<sup>th</sup> Street North, Birmingham, AL 35203. Customers will be required to change their Post Office Boxes, and the mail will be forwarded in accordance with postal regulations. Change of address forms are available from the Postal Service to assist customers in notifying correspondents of the change.

Thank you for your input in helping the Postal Service determine the best form of alternate mail service to meet the needs of the community. Retail services from the Main Post Office will ensure effective and regular services to the Downtown Birmingham community.

We appreciate all comments and concerns that were expressed in the process and we will continue to provide the best mail service to our customers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul T. Barrett".

Paul T. Barrett  
Postmaster, Birmingham

DATED 20 JUN 2003

DATE C

DATE C

PROPOSAL TO CONSOLIDATE  
THE BIRMINGHAM GREEN STATION  
AND ESTABLISH  
A CONTRACT POSTAL UNIT

DOCKET NUMBER 35237

## I. RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS

The Postal Service is proposing to consolidate the Birmingham Green Station and provide retail services by establishing a contract postal unit (CPU) under the administrative responsibility of the Main Post Office, located 4 blocks away.

A CPU is established on a contractual basis. The Postal Service solicits bids from the public for the operation of a postal facility. Award of the contract is based on evaluation of criteria including annual monetary amount, contractor ability and background, and the quality and location of the facility. The successful bidder must be bonded and will be trained, administered and supervised by the Postal Service. A CPU provides the same services as an independent post office except permit mail acceptance and postage meter setting.

The Birmingham Green Station provides service 47 hours a week from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday to 259 post office box customers. Retail services include the sale of stamps, stamped paper, and money orders; special services such as registered, certified, insured, delivery confirmation, signature confirmation, COD, and Express Mail; and the acceptance and dispatch of all classes of mail. Daily retail window transactions average 211. Office receipts for the last three years were: \$607,807 (1867 revenue units) in FY2002; \$605,065 (1920 revenue units) in FY 2001; and \$604,139 (1961 revenue units) in FY 2000. There are no permit mailers and one (1) postage meter customer. Administrative responsibility for the meter customer can transfer to the Main Post Office located 4 blocks away.

The Main Post Office, an EAS-26 level, provides service 65 hours a week from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday through Friday to 2733 post office box customers. Retail services include the sale of stamps, stamped paper, and money orders; special services such as registered, certified, insured, delivery confirmation, signature confirmation, COD, and Express Mail; and the acceptance and dispatch of all classes of mail. Daily retail window transactions average 1906. Office receipts for the last three years were: \$10,872,122.93 (33,405 revenue units) in FY 2002 and \$3,038,347.85 (9,639 revenue units) in FY 2001. There are 9,963 permit mailers and 787 post office boxes available at this location.

The CPU will provide at least the same number of window service hours and services as the station except for post office box services and permit mail acceptance or postage meter settings. Retail service is also available at the Woodlawn Post Office, an EAS-20 level office located 3 miles away. Window service hours at Woodlawn are from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, and 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM on Saturday. There are 439 post office boxes available at this location.

On April 17, 2003, representatives from the Postal Service were available at the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, 505 20<sup>th</sup> Street North to answer questions and provide information to customers. Approximately 17 customers attended the meeting.

On April 2, 2003, approximately 1500 questionnaires were distributed to post office box customers as well as to customer within an eight (8) block perimeter of the Birmingham Green Station. Questionnaires were also available over the counter for retail customers at both Birmingham Green and the Main Post Office. 276 questionnaires were returned. 33 responses were favorable, 188 unfavorable, and 55 expressed no opinion regarding the proposed alternate service.

A petition supporting the retention of the Birmingham Green Station was received on April 17, 2003, with approximately 150 signatures.

Congressional inquiries were received on January 24, 2003 and March 17, 2003.

The following postal concerns were expressed on the returned questionnaires, at the community meeting, from customer letters, on the petition, and from the two (2) congressional inquiries:

**Concern:** Customers felt the cost of postage was increasing while service was decreasing.

**Response:** The Postal Reorganization Act requires the Postal Service to operate on a breakeven basis. Most revenue is generated by the sale of postage, so when operational costs cannot be met, the Postal Service requests a rate increase. One advantage of this proposal is a savings for the Postal Service, which contributes in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers.

**Concern:** Customers expressed concern over the apparent lack of interest by the Postal Service for the needs of the community.

**Response:** The Postal Service is very interested in the service needs of the community and customer feedback is crucial to improving service. Concerns raised by the community will be investigated by the Postal Service and appropriate actions will be taken. The CPU will provide effective and regular service while avoiding detrimental impact upon the community. The CPU will offer the same service as a station, except for post office box service, permit mail acceptance and postage meter setting.

**Response:** The Postal Service is a customer-oriented organization that works hard to get its customers and employees to share that orientation. We appreciate hearing from customers on how successful those efforts have been. In this case, the concerns and opinions of the Birmingham Green Station customers were very important in determining the best alternate form of effective and regular service to offer the community.

**Concern:** Customers questioned the economic savings of the proposed discontinuance.

**Response:** Economic savings are only one of several factors considered. Economic savings have been calculated as required for discontinuance studies. The estimated cost of the CPU is based on price comparisons with other contracts providing similar services. A CPU is often located in an existing business and can operate more cost-effectively. The Postal Service estimates an annual savings of \$245,796.

**Concern:** Customers wanted the post office to stay the same. Customers said the CPU would be a disservice to the community.

**Response:** The CPU will be contracted to provide at least the same hours as the present post office. Depending on the location, the CPU may provide extended lobby hours. A CPU provides the same services as the Birmingham Green Station, except for post office box services, permit mail acceptance and postage meter settings.

**Concern:** Customers were concerned about later delivery of mail.

**Response:** Mail delivery times will remain the same.

**Response:** The top priority of the Postal Service is to provide mail service in the most efficient manner possible because all of our costs are reflected in postage rates customers must pay. Delivery costs are one of our biggest expenses, so you can be assured that careful thought is given to the structure of each route.

A customer's location on a carrier's line of travel determines the time of day mail is delivered. This, of course, precludes providing early delivery of mail to every customer because, no matter how we structure a route, somebody must be last. We do, however, carefully consider the volume of mail for each route so that we can deliver the greatest amount of mail at the earliest possible hour. With the largest fleet of delivery vehicles in the world, to minimize vehicle and



fuel expenses we must also pay special attention to energy conservation measures. When the price of gasoline goes up one cent per gallon our total gasoline cost raises more than \$1 million. Therefore, when structuring a route, we must balance our goal to deliver as much mail as possible as early as possible with the need to minimize the travel distance a route must cover.

We do regret the inconvenience to customers who would like, but cannot receive, early mail delivery. For those customers we offer alternative delivery services, such as post office box service or window caller service, that provide access to their mail earlier and throughout the day.

**Concern:** Customers wanted to know why the customer lines were so long at the Main Post Office.

**Response:** The Main Post Office serves a much larger community and has a heavier retail window workload. This concern has been brought to the attention of the Birmingham postmaster so he can monitor window operations and ensure that customers do not have an unreasonable wait to obtain services.

**Concern:** Customers were concerned about a change of address.

**Response:** Customers will experience an address change. Mail will be forwarded in accordance with postal regulations, and change of address forms is available from the Postal Service to assist customers in notifying correspondents of the change. An example of the change is shown below.

**Present Address:**

JOHN DOE  
PO BOX 1  
Birmingham AL 35237

**Proposed Address:**

JOHN DOE  
PO BOX 100  
Birmingham AL 35201

**Concern:** Customers complained about the driveway and parking lot of the Main Post Office.

**Response:** The driveway and parking lot conditions at the Main Post Office were brought to the attention of Administrative Services at the Alabama District.

**Concern:** Customers were concerned about senior citizens.

**Response:** The CPU will continue to provide the same services as an independent post office, except for post box services, permit mail acceptance and postage meter setting. The CPU operator will provide special assistance to senior citizens and those who face special challenges.

The following nonpostal concerns were expressed on the returned questionnaires, at the community meeting, on the petition and on the congressional inquiry:

**Concern:** Customers felt the loss of a post office would have a detrimental effect on the business community.

**Response:** Businesses generally require regular and effective postal services, and these will always be provided to the downtown financial community. There is no indication that the business community will be adversely affected. Questionnaire responses revealed that customers will continue to use local businesses if the post office is discontinued.

**Concern:** Customers felt the loss of the Birmingham Green station would discourage new businesses from coming to the community.

**Response:** Businesses generally require regular and effective postal services, and these will always be provided in the downtown financial community. There is no indication that the business community will be adversely affected. Most new businesses moving to the community do not depend on the location of a post office, but on the provision of effective and regular postal services. Questionnaire responses indicate customers will continue to patronize local businesses.

**Concern:** Customers felt the post office should remain open since they paid taxes.

**Response:** The Postal Service is not supported by tax dollars and must meet expenses by revenue it generates. Operational savings for the Postal Service contributes in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers.

Based on information the Postal Service obtained, it was determined that there has been minimal growth in the area in recent years. However, CPU service is expected to be able to handle any future growth in the community.

Based on the information obtained in the course of this discontinuance study, the Postal Service concludes this proposal will not adversely affect the community.

**Some advantages to the proposal are:**

1. Provides an opportunity for a local person to contract for the service which may add to the financial base of the community.
2. The hours can be established and adjusted to meet the changing needs of the community.
3. Provides the same retail service as an independent post office, except for post office box service, permit mail acceptance and postage meter settings.
4. A savings for the Postal Service, which contributes in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers.
5. The unit will continue to provide nonpostal services, a community gathering place, and information center.
6. Customer service will be enhanced by expanded lobby hours, improved customer parking, vending equipment, expanded window service hours, postal police onsite, and handicap access.

**Some disadvantages to the proposal are:**

1. Loss of a classified station and three (3) career positions.
2. The new location may be farther for some customers, but closer for others. However, the unit will be located in the community and convenience of location will be one of the factors in selecting the contractor.
3. A contract unit does not provide permit mail acceptance or postage meter settings. These services are available at the Main Post Office, located 4 blocks away.

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service concludes this proposal will provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to the community.

**II. EFFECT ON COMMUNITY**

Birmingham Green is located in the incorporated city of Birmingham. The area is administered politically by a municipal form of government. Police and fire protection is provided by the city of Birmingham. The community is comprised of downtown financial district, retail merchants, government agencies and those who commute to work at nearby communities and those who work in local businesses.

There are 1300 religious institutions in the community. Businesses include: University of Alabama at Birmingham, BellSouth, Baptist Medical Centers, Bruno's, AT&T, AmSouth, SouthTrust and the Harbert Plaza is near the Post Office. There are several Federal government agencies in Birmingham. Government: FBI, Federal Courthouse, Social Security, Small Business Administration, Housing and Urban Development, EEOC. The local city government and county officials are located in the downtown financial district. Residents travel to nearby communities for other supplies and services.

Nonpostal services provided at the Birmingham Green Station will be available at the Main Post Office.

**III. EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES**

The current lease expires on September 30, 2003. The supervisor will assume responsibility for the CPU; the other three (3) career clerks will become unassigned regulars until they bid out to vacant positions at the Main Post Office when the station is suspended. No other postal employee will be adversely affected.

**IV. ECONOMIC SAVINGS**

The Postal Service estimates an annual saving of \$245,796 with a breakdown as follows:

Clerk Salary (PS-5, Minimum, No COLA)	\$94,068
Fringe Benefits @33.5%	\$31,513
Rental Costs, Excluding Utilities	<u>+\$120,215</u>
Total Annual Costs	\$245,796
Less Annual Cost of Replacement Service	<u>-0-</u>
Total Annual Savings	\$245,796

**V. OTHER FACTORS**

The Postal Service is proposing that replacement service via CPU will provide a maximum degree of regular and effective postal services to Birmingham business district customers. The Postal Service fully intends to continue providing service via CPU. In rare circumstances, however, factors including those beyond the control of the Postal Service may require that consideration be given to closing a CPU. In the past, such circumstances have usually involved the absence of any qualified bidders and a near-total loss of customers. Any decision to discontinue a CPU must be made by the Vice President, Delivery and Retail, who reviews, in addition to customer input (which is encouraged), a request for discontinuance prepared by the District Manager, Customer Service and Sales, documenting service alternatives and the effects on postal services and the community.

**VI. SUMMARY**

The Postal Service is proposing to consolidate the Birmingham Green Station and provide retail services by establishing a contract postal unit (CPU) under the administrative responsibility of the Main Post Office, located 4 blocks away.

The Postal Service will vacate the facility by September 30, 2003, when the current lease expires. All career employees will assume other jobs at the Main Post Office. No other employee will be adversely affected.

The Main Post Office provides 65 hours of window service per week to the city of Birmingham customers. Daily retail window transactions average 1906. There are 9,963 permit mailers.

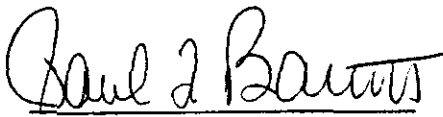
A CPU will continue to provide the same services as an independent post office, except for post office boxes, permit mailings and meter settings. There will be a loss of one supervisor and three clerk positions. However, a local person will have the opportunity to contract for the CPU, which may add to the financial base of the community. Customers will experience a change in address. The Postal Service will save an estimated \$245,796 annually. The CPU will be administered and supervised by the Postal Service to ensure that high standards of service are maintained.

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service has determined that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and this proposal is warranted.

#### **VII. NOTICES**

- A. **Support Materials.** Copies of all materials upon which this proposal is based are available for public inspection at the Birmingham Green Station and Main Post Offices during normal office hours.
- B. This is a proposal. It is not a final determination to consolidate this station. If a final determination is made to consolidate this station, after public comments on this proposal are received and taken into account, a notice of that final determination will be posted in the Main Post Office.

The final determination will contain instructions on how affected customers may appeal that decision to the Postal Rate Commission. Any such appeal must be received by the Commission within 30 days of the posting of the final determination.



Postmaster

6-10-03

Date